

STATEMENT
Before the
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
Hearing
May 4, 2006

By

Mr. Randall R. Perkins

President.
AshBritt, Inc.

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My name is Randy Perkins and I am the President of AshBritt, Inc. an environmental services company with expertise in a range of disciplines that fall into one or more of our four divisions: Disaster Recovery Services, Solid Waste Services, Engineering Services, an Special Environmental Services.

Your Committee's letter dated April 20, 2006 asked that I address three matters: (1) the first of which was that I provide an overview of AshBritt and the services that the firm provides; (2) the second of which concerned AshBritt's role as a contractor to the Federal government; and (3) the third of which requested my own personal views regarding federal contracting vehicles, methods and policies.

In response to the first request regarding AshBritt's services, I would observe that our firm has, particularly over the last decade, created a network of resources capable of dealing with a range of services from emergency needs such as road clearance and debris removal to demolition of unsafe structures, decontamination, and fire suppression support. A very detailed description of all of our services is available for viewing at our web site, www.ashbritt.com.

Regarding the Committee's second reference to AshBritt's roles and responsibilities as a contractor with the Federal Government, it is first necessary to point out that Hurricane Katrina's size and scope dramatically altered the Federal response from the usual circumstance wherein which FEMA would have had oversight over local and state governmental contracting for storm damage recovery to a massive undertaking in which FEMA tasked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the usually locally initiated contract responsibilities.

Ordinarily, AshBritt (as well as its competitors nationwide) deals with a city, county (parish) or local entity in assisting its efforts to recover from a natural disaster while achieving compliance with the rules and regulations promulgated by FEMA upon which local reimbursement is dependent.

However, AshBritt, in the year 2002, had been successful in a competitive selection process through which the United States Army Corps of Engineers pre-positioned contractors throughout regions of the United States as a future resource in the event of a major catastrophe such as that subsequently cause by Hurricane Katrina. AshBritt was in the third year of its contract for the Louisiana and Mississippi region when FEMA made the decision to task the Katrina debris removal to the Corps of Engineers.

The impact of Katrina was so great that even the pre-positioning of AshBritt (or any other single contractor) was insufficient to respond to the needs of the entire region. AshBritt subsequently was assigned the State of Mississippi and given the specific role as detailed in its contract with the Corps of Engineers, which contract covers debris collection, temporary storage at reduction sites, debris reduction, and quality assurance that includes supervision to ensure compliance with governmental requirements and regulations.

AshBritt's experience and expertise results from years of dealing with dozens of local governmental entities from New Jersey to Florida to North Dakota and several other states, many of whom are listed under the heading "CLIENTS" on the web site referenced above.

Finally, the Committee expressed a third area of interest asking for my personal views of federal contracting vehicles, methods and policies generally, concluding with my views of the set aside and local contractor provisions under the Stafford Act.

While I do not feel qualified to assess federal policies for contracting, I do feel that I can comment on one aspect of the Corps of Engineers process for pre-positioning contractors throughout geographic regions. I concur with the Corps' determination that experienced contractors should be selected from among proposals received from firms capable of rapid response to an affected region, but not firms themselves located within that region, thus avoiding their potential incapacitation by the same disaster.

Consequently, I have no complaint that my own home state of Florida has a pre-positioned contractor based in Tennessee. Similarly, an Alabama firm with which I am familiar is not the pre-positioned Alabama contractor but is currently the contractor in Texas, where the firm was pre-positioned, and is working on the response to Hurricane Rita. The geographic pre-positioning is good planning for an event of the magnitude of Katrina/Rita.

Regarding any other matters of Federal contract policy, I do not feel that I have the expertise to make legislative or regulatory suggestions but I can and I am proud to outline what AshBritt has accomplished since Katrina in furtherance of the mission outlined in its own federal contract and in compliance with existing laws and regulations.

AshBritt Katrina By-The-Numbers:

Greater than 20,000,000 cubic yards of debris and wreckage removed;

Greater than 650,000 loads of debris hauled;

Greater than 12,400 hauling vehicles registered;

Greater than 1,230 subcontractors worked;

Greater than 19,000 tons of spoiled food removed;

More than 300 Government personnel provided emergency quarters;

More than 10,000 meals served to Government personnel;

Less than .01 percent lost time injuries v. total man hours of work.

As to the question of local contractor participation, AshBritt's most recent contract filing with the Corps of Engineers (4/28/06) reflects over eighty-seven (87.1%) percent affected area contractors in small business and eighty-seven and eight tenths (87.8%) percent affected area large business contractors.

AshBritt's record is one of which I am most proud in its performance under this contract, and I am further pleased from recognition given our team by others, such as the communication received by us from the Corps of Engineers Resident Engineer, James Aldrich, a copy of which I have furnished to the Committee.

This concludes my statement.

From: Aldrich, James R SPL [mailto:James.R.Aldrich@spl01.usace.army.mil]
Sent: Friday, March 31, 2006 11:43 AM
To: Fernando@doradosi.com; buddylofton@yahoo.com; brad freeman; Terry Jackson
Subject: Thanks for the help

Terry, As the Resident Engineer responsible for the counties of Jackson and George, Mississippi I feel it is necessary to express my appreciation for the exceptional service and support your organization has provided this office in accomplishing our mission. From my first visit to your field office it was apparent the your staff wanted to work together as a team. The partnering concept is not new to the Government and obviously not your Gautier team either. In my thirty eight years in this business I have not worked with a contractor team that worked as well as the AshBritt team did with the Government. Our accomplishments in working and completing in excess of eight thousand Right-of-Entries in 90 days are a testimonial to our team work. Under the direction of Bill Johnson we never encountered a situation that we could not resolve. This office has received hundreds of phone calls reference the home owners satisfaction and appreciation for the work that we have accomplished. Together we have touched the lives and hearts of thousands of the wonderful citizens of south east Mississippi. As with any mission there are those that had issues for us to deal with and with our team we dealt with each and every one. It was clear that your field staff was promoting AshBritt commitment to customer satisfaction. We worked with the cities to accomplish their agenda and priority that they had established.

Your team never faltered when requested to provide additional resources to work within the availability of Government staffing. Together we would reevaluate the work areas so that we could utilize the least amount of field supervision for the largest amount of area of work. Your Gautier staff was knowledgeable, skilled, and possessed the ability to work this debris mission like a science.

Safety was a major concern for both of our safety teams but we worked together as a team continually training, reminding and reinforcing our safety policy. Considering the fact we worked better than a thousand square miles with hundreds of workers and hundreds of thousands man-hours our safety lost time were kept to a minimum with the outcome being exceptional. Great job.

As with usual I am short on time but wanted to say a special thanks for the effort, support, and professionalism of those that I worked with directly. Mr. Bill Johnson, Fernando Neris, Brad Freeman, Buddy Lofton, and Jason Santiago.

Thanks AshBritt, I am leaving this mission satisfied that what I came to accomplish is accomplished and I could not have done this without you.

James R. Aldrich
Resident Engineer
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